DRAMATIC ART OF PARTAP SHARMA: AN ANALIYSIS OF THEMES AND TECHNIQUES

A

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Introduction:

Pratap Sharma, the winner of Sahitya Akademi Award is a versatile dramatist in Indian writing in English. His plays reflect the contemporary reality in the society. He has handled the controversial issues like prostitution, premarital sex, poverty, identity and myth. He is one of the most outstanding dramatists who have the rare talent to investigate the problems in the society and to dramatize them on the stage. The plays appeared at the intervals from 1956 to 2005. *Brother under the skin* (1956), *Bars Invisible* (1961), *A Touch of Brightness* (1965), *The word* (1966), *The Professor has a War Cry* (1970), *Queen bee* (1976), *Power Play* (1991) *Begum Sumroo* (1997), *Zen Katha* (2004) *Sammy!* (2005) and staged plays to his credit. Partap Sharma has directed some outstanding documentaries, as independent producer and for the government of India's films Division, and channel four Television, UK. His film credits in clued; *The Framework of Famine* (1967) , *The Flickering Flame* (1974), *The Empty Hand* (1982), *View Point Amritsar* (1984), *The British Raj Through Indian Eyes* (1992).

Sharma's association with the India National Theatre, Mumbai, began in 1961 with the production by it of his first full-length play *Bars Invisible* and continued until the production of the banned *A Touch of Brightness*. Sharma has voiced many National and International award- winning document arise and short film. His Plays did not fully flower until the reader's interest and audience's response come towards his techniques and Stage crafts. His fame chiefly rests on his plays and a long famous novel. Partap Sharma's achieves

this by employing history, myth and struggle for identity which hold him unique position as a modern dramatist. Indeed, his literary success comes with some of his dramas. Pratap Sharma is one of the leading playwrights in India today. In the realm of Indian English literature, Sharma occupies a quite large place as the most powerful of Indian dramatists who search out the realities of contemporary Society in order to had them up to focus. His writing output deals with history and other contemporary aspects. The present study aims at analyzing the selected plays of Pratap Sharma critically in terms of the themes and technique.

Themes in the plays of Pratap Sharma:

Pratap Sharma was an Indian Playwright, novelist author of books for children, commentator, actor and documentary film-maker from United Kingdom. His dialogues are effective and themes are relevant to contemporary Indian English drama as, sex, poverty, identity, Social reality and myth and full of historical aspects.

Techniques in the plays of Pratap Sharma:

Pratap Sharma has captivated one with his stage drama and fictional writing. Though his works, he takes as back to that period of history (pre-independent India) which has nostalgia associated with it. Whether it is description of Mughals or the British Raj, he decides it, all in a very fascinating and interesting Manner. But this does not mean that he lives in the post only. He is a writer who is very much aware of the issues of the times and thus. The contemporary issues also find and expressions in his writing; depiction of

historical events, characters and places, use of mythological figures and events, existential philosophy etc.

Pratap Sharma has used different techniques in his plays. His last but highly celebrated play in two acts is *Sammy!* It has solid historical cultivation of Gandhi's deeds of India's freedom struggle. Among his other well known staged plays *Brother's under the Skim*, a one act play which is beginning of his dramatic career and staged during his college life in a drama competition at St. Xavier's college, Bombay with winning two prizes. *Bars Invisibles* is a three act play. It is written for the Bombay arts festival. *The Professor Has a War Cry*, a five act play and it is first produced in Bombay by the impermanent theatre on 15th January, 1970. It is full of irrelevances and is a "hotch potch" of mantras, dancers burning Ghats and horror of partition. It deals with the dilemma of university professor. Sex is the main theme of this drama. His *Queen Bee* is a wonderful full length play. The specialty of drama is that all the characters are females. It is produced and directed by Sam Kerawala in Bombay in 1967 and *Power play* is a satirical farce produced by "Hosi Vasunia" and the Dynasty Club Bombay.

Significance of the Study:

Pratap Sharma, the winner of Sahitya Akademi Award is a versatile dramatist in Indian writing in English. His plays reflect the contemporary reality in the society. He has handled the controversial issues like prostitution, premarital sex, poverty, identity and myth. This is an attempt to bring fresh insight into the understanding of the thematic and structural aspects of Pratap

Sharma's plays. This work will help the readers and researchers for the better comprehension of the thematic concern in the plays of Pratap Sharma.

Hypothesis:

The contribution of Pratap Sharma as a playwright is notable. He handles a multiplicity of themes in his drama. The dimensions of his themes cover an important aspects concerning humanity. He deals with the themes such as sex, poverty, identity, Social reality and myth and full of historical aspects. By projecting this sort of issues through his drama, he turns out more a sociological dramatist than a mere stage craftsman. By undertaking the study of the themes and techniques in his plays, the researcher would like to focus new light upon the comprehensive analysis of his plays.

Aims and Objectives of the Research:

The present research aims to study…

1. To study the perspective of Indian English drama.
2. To study the course and content of the plays of Pratap Sharma.
3. To study the contemporary relevance of the plays of Pratap Sharma.
4. To study the dramatic techniques in the plays of Pratap Sharma.
5. To study the multiple themes in the plays of Pratap Sharma.

Scope and Limitation:

The research would deal with the selected plays of Pratap Sharma. It will no doubt be useful for researcher, teachers and students who intend to pursue on and about Partap Sharma and his works. It will help them to analyses the theme and techniques in the plays of Partap Sharma. The select works

comprise *A Touch of Brightness, Brothers under the Skin, Begum Sumroo*, *Zen Katha, Sammy! The Word that Broke an Empire*, *Bars Invisible, The Word, Professor has a War cry, Queen Bee* and *Power Play.*

Probable date of completion:

This research project is proposed to be completed within the time limit as stipulated by the university.

Research Methodology:

The method of library research would be followed for the present study. Internet resources would also be utilized.

Brief review of the plays of Pratap Sharma:

***A Touch of Brightness* (1965):**

A Touch of Brightness (1964) centers around Rukmini, a girl sold to a brothel in Mumbai and her relationship with Pidku, a street urchin, who tries desperately to rescue her from her life as a prostitute. Rukmini mesmerizes Pidku with her visionary stories of the gods and her dreams of a married life as the wife of the blue god Krishna.. Even in a brothel, her extravagant optimism never ceases but only deepens.

In 1965 the play was selected for the first Commonwealth Arts Festival from among 150 works of Commonwealth writers. It was also invited to tour four theatres in Britain for a commercial run. In September 1965 the production troupe, sponsored by the Indian National Theatre, was prohibited from proceeding to England. The play was banned in Mumbai in 1966 on the grounds that it was set in the infamous redlight area of the city and therefore

'dealt with subjects which should not be depicted on stage'. Seven years later, in 1972, the Mumbai High Court decreed that the censoring authority had 'exceeded its jurisdiction' and the ban was revoked. The play was produced by the Indian National Theatre in Mumbai in 1973. Meanwhile, the play had become a subject of academic study in universities in India and abroad.

***Begum Sumroo*:**

Begum Sumroo (2004) is set in the late eighteenth century during the decline of the Moghul Empire. It traces the picaresque adventures of a legendary historical figure from British India. Farzana, is a peerless courtesan who after seducing Sombre, acquires the kingdom of Sardhana from Emperor Shah Alam, and commands a fierce brigade of 3000 European and Indian soldiers and morphs into a powerful ruler, known for her political accomplishments as well as her amorous liaisons. It is the story is of an amazing Indian woman who was ahead of her time and ours.

Zen Katha (2004)

Zen Katha tells the story of how Bodhidharma, born a prince in South India in the fifth century, had to discover ways to excel at unarmed combat because the royal Pallavas prided themselves on their wrestling skills. The prince became a monk and travelled to China. There, his strange behaviour let to various piquant situations. He became not only the Founding Patriarch of Zen but also the first peaceful fighting monk. As Chief Abbot of the Monastery of Shaolin, he initiated the tradition that now makes it unique.

Sammy! The word that broke an Empire (2006)

The play brings a live Gandhi's philosophy, pragmatism, and sense of humour. Partap Sharma's play unwinds Gandhi's concepts and his techniques for non-violent struggle. The play is captivating as we realize that Gandhi's struggle has no enemy, no arms, no hate nor revenge, but only the inner strength of millions of ordinary men, women and children.

Sharma's Sammy has also travelled all the way successfully to the Scotland. The story in itself will be a form of reviving the values of Mahatma in foreign lands through theatre and this play has been woven as the director (Pranay Ahluwalia) has tried to show history through modern eyes which would lead the audience into the era which shaped the future of India for generations to come.

Brothers under the Skin (1956):

Brothers under the Skin is a one-act play staged at a drama competition at St. Xavier's College, Bombay, in 1956, it won two prizes.

Bars Invisible (1961):

Bars Invisible is a three-act play; first produced in Bombay by the Indian National Theatre on 10th June, 1961.

The Word (1966):

The Word is a three-act play which was first produced for the Bombay Arts Festival by the Theatre Group, directed by Alyque Padamsee, it opened on 26th March, 1966.

The Professor Has a War Cry (1970):

The Professor has a War Cry (1970) is a five-act play that deals with the anguish and mental conflict of Virendra who comes to know that he is an illegitimate child of a mother successively raped by a Muslim and an Englishman and deserted by her lover, a Hindu professor. In a play full of shock and suspense, Virendra and the professor kill each other. There is lot of melodrama, but the play is noticeable for its keen sense of situation and effective dialogues.

Queen Bee (1976):

Queen Bee is a full-length play and has an all-female cast. It was produced and directed by Sam Kerawalla in Bombay, 1976.

Power Play (1991):

Power Play is a satirical farce, produced by Hosi Vasunia & the Dynasty Club, Bombay, directed by Toni Patel, 1991.

Plan of the Thesis:

The present research work is divided into five chapters. The research project deals with Themes and Techniques in the plays Partap Sharma. The tentative chapter scheme of the present research project will be as follows.

I. Introduction

II. Course and Content of the Plays of Partap Sharma

III. Contemporary Relevance of the Plays of Partap Sharma

IV. Dramatic Technique in the Plays of Partap Sharma

V. Conclusion

Tentative Chapter Scheme:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter will cover the origin and development of Indian Drama in English in general and contribution of Partap Sharma in particular. It will also cover the literary output of Partap Sharma.

Chapter II: Course and Content of the Plays of Partap Sharma

This chapter will explore the course and content of the selected plays of Partap Sharma. It will also deal with the core and content of the selected plays. Different themes of the plays will be discussed elaborately.

Chapter III: Contemporary Relevance of the Plays of Partap Sharma

This chapter will explore the social relevance of the selected plays of Partap Sharma. These plays deal with the contemporary issues and history. An attempt will be made to focus on the contemporary relevance of the selected plays.

Chapter IV: Dramatic Technique in the Plays of Partap Sharma

This chapter will explore the dramatic techniques used by Partap Sharma in his dramatic output.

Chapter V: Conclusion

This chapter intends to focus on the comparative side of the selected plays and sum up the argument of the earlier chapters and will ultimately come to a certain conclusion.

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5. ---------- *Bars Invisible*
6. ---------- *The Word*
7. ---------- *Professor has a War cry*
8. ---------- *Queen Bee*
9. ---------- *Power Play*
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